



Standing Advisory Committee on Consumer Affairs

February 2010 Meeting Report

The second meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Consumer Affairs (SACCA) was held by teleconference in February 2010.

SACCA members discussed open action items from the previous meeting. It was noted that ACCAN, the Deaf Australia and Deafness Forum had written to the Minister to ascertain the status of the recently completed report into emergency access to 106 via SMS.

ACCAN will shortly develop a knowledge management system to collect case studies and is still considering how best to capture this information. Members agreed to the importance of case studies as practical and useful resources. The meeting discussed ways that case studies can be presented to ACCAN in the most useful form. There was general discussion about what information is required from case studies for various stakeholders.

The meeting discussed ACCAN's workplan, which was provided to members on a confidential basis. The key policy issues were varied and reflected ACCAN's Strategic Plan. Future ACCAN campaigns will focus on the combined failures of service providers. ACCAN staff clarified that a 'small but kickable' campaign denotes issues that ACCAN will have the capacity to campaign on with short notice.

The Committee Members agreed that the document 'Roles, responsibilities and function of SACCA' provided a clear understanding of the direction of SACCA.

ACCAN staff discussed the ways ACCAN is actively building its profile through a number of methods including: ongoing CEO speaking engagements, the 'Pay to pay' campaign which attracted a good response from consumers, a media strategy and utilising our existing networks. ACCAN also plans to develop a viral campaign through short, video messages in the near future. There was general discussion on profile building methods, and members were encouraged to help spread the word wherever possible.

ACCAN staff gave an overview of the 'pay to pay' campaign, in which ACCAN, Choice and the Australian Financial Counselling and Credit Reform Association sent a joint Christmas card to asking telco CEOs to abolish this set of unfair fees. The campaign generated 260 emails from the public and ACCAN network members and generated a lot of media coverage.

Independent Grants Scheme round 1 applications were noted to have closed, and round 2 applications close on 18 March 2010. The Independent Grants Panel consists of Robin Banks, Kate Cornick and Tim Dwyer.



ACCAN staff presented to a Senate Committee Inquiry into the Do Not Call Register earlier this month. ACCAN lobbied to abolish the need for re-registration every three years, and to allow consumers to fully customise their registration by removing current exemptions. Senate Committee recommendations were due in the week following the meeting.

Members were invited to submit input to ACCAN to a number of consultations ACCAN intends to respond to.

The Committee confirmed their availability for future meeting dates as proposed by ACCAN, and a number of advance apologies were noted.

A member raised the issue of problems associated with capped Broadband services, in particular for young people. There was general discussion about the removal of payphones and the impact on consumers in rural areas, and ACCAN staff welcomed any case studies on payphone removal.

ACCAN staff advised that a Senior Policy Officer role will be advertised in the near future.

Members confirmed the November 2009 Meeting Report was what they expected it to be, and agreed for it to be published on ACCAN's website and be circulated to constituents (with minor typographical changes).